

# School Tabletops, Drills and Exercises



***U.S. Department of Education  
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools  
Emergency Management for Schools Training  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
April 10-11, 2008***



Thanks for all that you do...

*“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”*

*-Thomas Edison*

# “Fear Management”



Alarmist

Complacency

We Should be Here

*Proactive Liability Management*

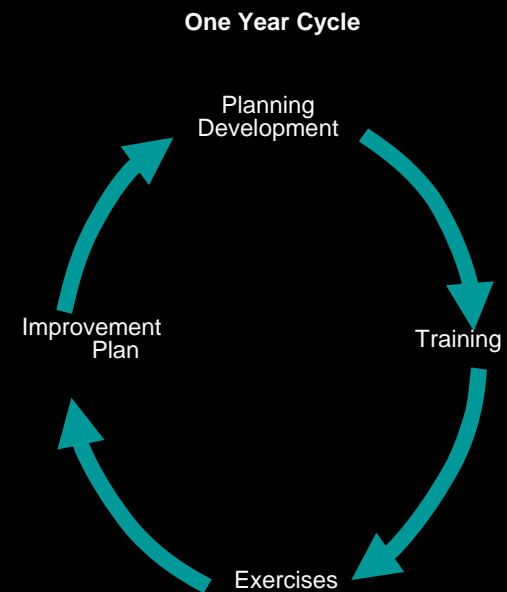


# Disclaimers

- **Use the information presented in this program as a generic guide. Always follow the policies and procedures set up by your school district.**
- **Local public safety officials should be contacted for their assistance when developing your emergency response protocols and exercises.**
- **Establishing relationships with first responders prior to an incident is paramount!**

# Common Exercise Mistakes

- **Scenarios that are not unique to the area**
- **Timing of the exercise**
- **No accurate critique of the exercise**
- **Safety issues are not addressed properly**
- **Planned and initiated too quickly**
- **Some critical agencies are not included**
- **After action items are not implemented**



# Review of Exercise Types

## Building Block Approach



# Why Conduct Tabletop Exercises?

- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Evaluate plans and procedures
- Develop effective agency relationships
- Assess resources and capabilities
- Identify needs and solutions
- Some states have legislation requiring school exercises and drills



**Many emergency management agencies and other accredited public safety agencies must conduct various types of exercises on an annual basis.**



# Seek Assistance

## Local Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

- **Local Public Safety Agencies**
- **School District Personnel or School Resource Officer**
- **Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)**
- **State and Local Homeland Security Agencies**

**A Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) is a committee that is comprised of members from government, industry and elected officials who are involved in emergency planning activities in a community. Check with your local Emergency Manager.**

*Developing a Tabletop exercise:*

# Getting Started: Steps for Success

## Pre-Planning

- Hazard Analysis
- Establish Objectives
- Inform the Media
- Orientation Meetings
- Set Timelines
- Identify Participants
- Pre-exercise Training
- Single agency Drill

## Tabletop Exercise

- Identify a Facilitator
- Identify a Scribe
- Draft the Narrative
- Room Layout
- Breaks/Refreshments
- Presentation
- Copies of Materials
- Sign-in Sheet
- Conduct the Exercise

## After Action

- Immediate Debriefing
- Participant Evaluation
- Comprehensive Report
- Post-Exercise Meeting
- Functional Exercise
- Full-Scale Exercise
- Revisions
- Training
- Implementation

Developing a tabletop exercise normally evolves over a one month to three month period if conducted properly.



# Pre-Planning

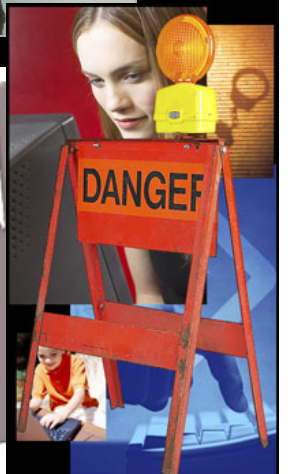
- **Orientation meeting with all proposed participants**
- **Conduct a hazard analysis (check with local EMA)**
- **Choose a scenario based on risks/hazards in area**
- **Determine if other agencies need to be invited**
- **Establish an Exercise Design Team (EDT)**
- **Establish objectives (single agency and overall)**
- **Designate an exercise facilitator**
- **Establish an exercise timeline and meeting schedule**
- **Develop the scenario (Exercise Plan or EXPLAN)**

# Who Should be Included in this Process?

- **School Officials (Board of Education, other school administrators and School based ERTs)**
- **Law Enforcement (Police, Sheriff, SRO, State, Military Police, Tribal)**
- **Fire Agencies (City, County, Correctional Facility)**
- **Emergency Management**
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Air Medical Units**
- **Public Transit (bus, rail, metro, etc.)**
- **911 Dispatch**
- **Hospitals**
- **Public Health**
- **Mental Health**
- **Media**
- **Parents**



# Choose a Scenario that is Likely to Impact Your Area



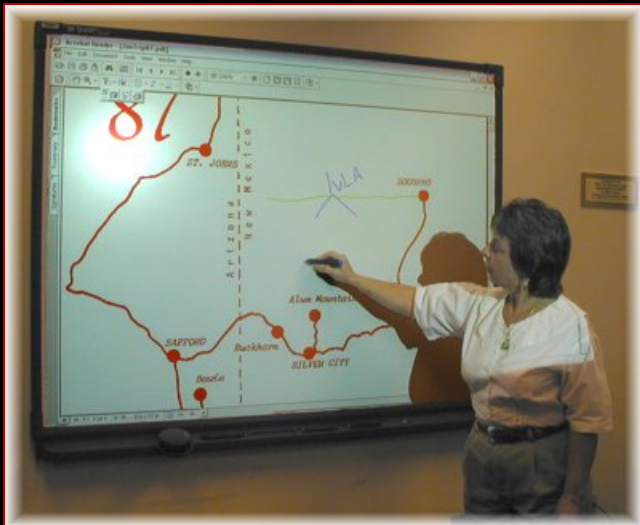
## Include National Incident Management System (NIMS) Principles

- **Make sure that one objective is to implement the Incident Command System (ICS)**
- **School administrators should utilize NIMS principles in their roles**
- **Resources: OHS-GEMA “Education for Disaster DVD”**
- **FEMA Courses: IS 700 and ICS 100.SC**



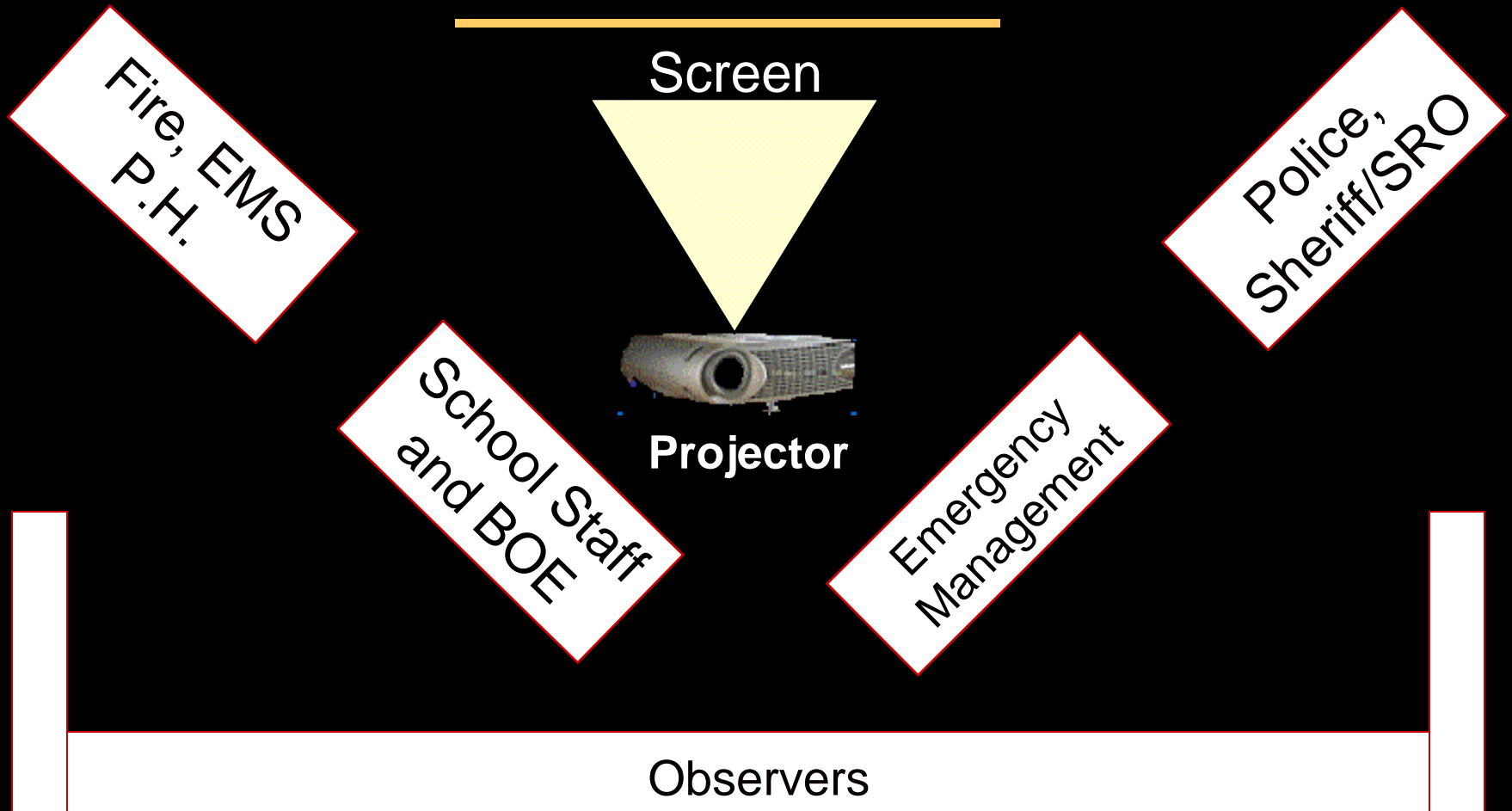
**“Not about who is in charge, but who is in charge of what...”**

# Tabletop Exercise Preparation



- Flipchart and markers
- Scribe
- A/V equipment
- Attendance sheet
- Extra seats for observers
- Name tents
- Copies of the exercise scenario
- School floor plans
- Emergency plans-school/county
- Maps (street/aerial/bus routes)
- Additional pre-incident information
- Participant evaluation form
- Exercise debriefing plan (AAR/IP)

# Sample Room Layout



This is an example of a room layout for a tabletop exercise involving a school related scenario

# The After Action Process

- Immediate debriefing
- Evaluator and participant comments
- Written comments from evaluators
- After Action Report (AAR)
- After action meeting (weeks later)
- Improvement plan and implementation timeline
- Training



“Make sure lessons learned are not lessons lost.”

# Sample Best Practice:

## *Faculty Meeting Plan “Read” (Review)*

Take 5 to 10 minutes at every faculty meeting to present a section of your school emergency plan and review the procedures. Allow ample time for discussion and questions to ensure that all staff are familiar with the responses. Great for new faculty and staff and begins to promote a culture of safety, security and emergency planning.



# Discuss a Sample Teacher Scenario

- A student approaches you at the beginning of class and advises that he knows another student in your class has a bomb in his book bag.

What are your actions at this point?

Who should you call?

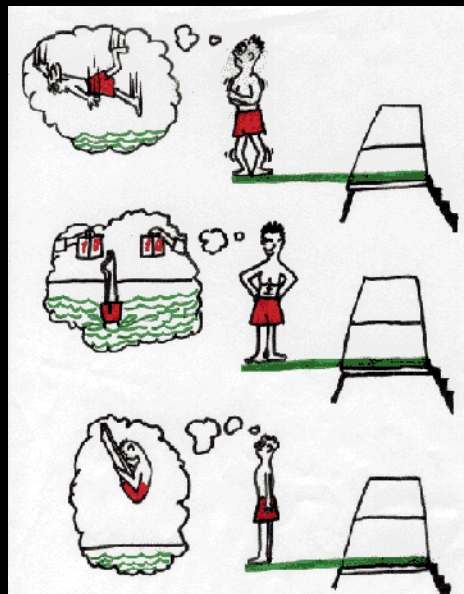
Who is in charge?



*Video or audio clips create more realism!*

## Sample Best Practice: Visualization Techniques

**Encourage staff to practice visualization techniques. Provide them with a scenario and ask them to visualize what they would do in that scenario. Make sure that you provide them with the appropriate and correct response protocols or best practices.**



## Sample Best Practice: District Tabletop Exercises

Hold several tabletops in the district and invite administrative representatives or school based Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) from other schools in the district to observe the tabletop. This allows appropriate personnel from the entire district to be involved and possibly participate in one of the exercises.



# Lock-Down Drills

- Follow your district or school procedures
- Hard lock-down versus soft lock-down
- Coordinate with school security and law enforcement – have them observe or participate
- Make the drills realistic but do so safely
- Notification/Communication/Accountability
- Test students and staff who are located outside
- Debrief the same day with your teachers/staff



# Fire Evacuation Drills

- Follow your district or school policies and procedures
- Have the local fire department observe or participate
- Block normal routes or use human “blockers”
- Are special needs staff, students and visitors considered?
- Test accountability procedures (use the visitor log or other systems)
- Monitor the evacuation routes (stay away from the kitchen and compressed gases)



# Severe Weather Emergency Drills

- Follow your district and school policies and procedures
- Have your local emergency manager observe and assist
- Test warning and notification systems
- Check to make sure the best sheltering areas are being utilized in the facility
- Maintain student and staff accountability
- Practice student release procedures





# For More Information

- “Critical Incident Response: The First Twenty Minutes” (NC):  
[www.cpsv.org](http://www.cpsv.org)
- Exercise Development/Design Courses (FEMA) Online Training:  
<http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/> (IS-120.A, IS-130, IS-139)
- *Copy of DVD: “Education for Disaster”*:  
[www.gema.state.ga.us](http://www.gema.state.ga.us) (OHS-GEMA)
- Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP):  
<http://www.hseep.dhs.gov/>

Check for local and state resources too!



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